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The Lemanu-Talauega Administration Continues to Take Action on American Samoa's Economic Development



Investment and Opportunity for a Chicken Farm in American Samoa

American Samoa has dealt with unprecedented supply chain challenges, especially by the Island's rural and remote location. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the Island's economy, disrupting supply chains and contributing to major delays in shipping. The shortage of supply and high demand caused a spike in food prices and limited resources. There were uncertainties and frustration among the people of American Samoa during the pandemic restrictions. The Lemanu-Talauega administration is taking action to further develop opportunities to help prepare and sustain the American Samoa economy during difficult times like the COVID-19 nationwide lockdown.

On February 1, 2023, Governor Lemanu, Chief of Staff Loa, Directors Mutini, Matila, Voigt, Tuato'o, and Tuiafono visited a Chicken Farm in Maryland to explore its operation with hatchery, incubation, and processing processes. Chicken is an indispensable part of the lives of the people in American Samoa and the cost of a box of chicken continues to rise due to the inflation that is affecting the whole nation. The Lemanu-Talauega administration's path forward is for American Samoa to prepare and supply its chicken. The chicken farm will be a collaborative effort between the government and the community. It will provide job opportunities and initiate an affordable entry point for long-term economic investment. The investment into the chicken farm can be transformed into a wide array of marketable products that will benefit the people of American Samoa. Director Mutini is scheduling a follow-up virtual meeting with Mr. Adam Kim from the Eastern Contractors Corporation to put together a strategy to work on the next steps.

StarKist's Growth and Continuity in American Samoa

The President & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of StarKist, Mr. Chae-Ung Um, and his executive staff invited Governor Lemanu and his team to tour their headquarters in Reston, Virginia on February 2, 2023. Unfortunately, Governor Lemanu was not able to attend due to another conflicting meeting, but the Chief of Staff Loa and a team of directors were able to meet with CEO Mr. Chae-Ung Um and his team. The meeting started with a tour led by StarKist's Head of Corporate Affairs; Michelle Faist followed by sampling a few of the top Tuna products that are exclusively made in American Samoa.

Chief of Staff Loa and the directors were impressed by the great taste and quality of the Tuna products. The Tuna products that were sampled are not sold in American Samoa. The local businesses can put in a request with StarKist to purchase and sell these top Tuna products at their stores. Another special product that is exclusively made in American Samoa is the military Tuna pouch. According to CEO Mr. Chae-Ung Um, he is working with the CEO of 7-Eleven and the military to purchase and sell the military Tuna pouches.

The American Samoa Department of Commerce (DOC) Director Matila invited CEO Mr. Chae-Ung Um and his team to join the "Atoa o Samoa" tradeshow in April. The tradeshow is the first organized event under the Atoa o Samoa and its purpose is to encourage local entrepreneurs to market and sell their locally-made products. The tradeshow will be a great opportunity for StarKist to market the top Tuna products and more to the neighboring Island of Samoa. CEO Mr. Chae-Ung Um agreed and he has assigned a team to work on the logistics and to become a part of the tradeshow in April.

The tour ended with a meeting in a conference room with the StarKist executives including CEO Mr. Chae-Ung Um, CFO Young Choi, Director of Legal Sang Lee, SVP (Finance) Tilo Gomez, Director (R&D) Barry Traband, SVP (Supply Chain) Earl Moynihan, and Michelle Faist.

Michelle expressed gratitude to the American Samoan people and acknowledged their contributions to StarKist's success. CEO Mr. Chae-Ung Um spoke next and he thanked the government for opening the guest worker program to assist with the impact of COVID-19 on StarKist's operation. Mr. Chae-Ung Um asked for the American Samoa government's (ASG) help to expand StarKist to other countries. He acknowledged that Congresswoman Uifataali Amata will need to be looped into these conversations soon. Mr. Chae-Ung Um reminded the Chief of Staff and the rest of the group about the celebration for the 60th birthday since StarKist has been established in American Samoa. This is a huge milestone and American Samoa has been a huge part of StarKist's success. The CEO Mr. Chae-Ung Um plans to visit American Samoa for StarKist's 60th birthday. Finally, the CEO asked about StarKist's involvement in the upcoming flag day. The Chief of staff Loa confirmed with the CEO that the ASG will be on standby to support when StarKist is ready to expand to other countries. ASG will also continue to support the guest worker program. "A success for StarKist is a success for American Samoa" stated Chief of Staff Loa. As part of StarKist's birthday celebration, Chief Loa invited StarKist to participate in the upcoming Flag Day.

The meeting concluded with the exchange of gifts between the two groups. CEO Mr. Chae-Ung Um was gifted a carved traditional plate, *Ulafala*, and locally made *Moana* Taro Chips. The StarKist team presented gift baskets of individual tunas to each of the American Samoa team members that attended the tour and meeting.

ASG is committed to fostering the relationship with CEO Mr. Chae-Ung Um and his team for the continuous success of StarKist and its people.

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